

REMARKS

This communication is in response to the Office Action mailed December 7, 2004.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected all of the claims as being variously anticipated by five different references. By and large, the cited references (at least the portions specifically cited by the Examiner) disclose providing a plasma source gas to various areas of a processing chamber in some controlled fashion. For example, the Bailey patent publication discloses controlling the relative flow ratio of gas supplied to different locations in the chamber. See [0038]. Singh employs two different gas rings. See col. 4, lines 29-46. Hartig discloses a plurality of channels in which processing gases are independently supplied to each channel, each potentially at an individual flow rate and gas composition. See Abstract. Krussell discloses various pairs of peripheral input ports. See col. 3, lines 32-49. Kondo discloses various flow paths. See col. 9, lines 18-55. Finally, the JPO disclosure appears to disclose plural discharge outlets into a treating chamber.

In summary, with all of the cited references, the distribution of gas to various locations of the processing chamber appear to be disclosed as a "static" distribution. By contrast, the claims (some, as amended) recite, in part, switching between outputting a component of a process recipe into a first processing zone of a processing chamber and outputting the component into a second processing zone of the processing chamber. This dynamic aspect is noticeably absent from all of the cited references.

While claim 2 has been amended to clarify this aspect, a similar feature is already present in claim 15. That is, claim 15 recites the "alternately distributing" step which, similar to the "switching" step of claim 2, is not present in the cited references.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS, LLP



Alan S. Hodes
Reg. No. 38,185

P.O. Box 70250
Oakland, CA 94612-0250
(650) 961-8300